

6MINUTES **NEWS**

9 out of 10 babies exposed to peanuts

Proportion of parents giving infants peanuts is much higher than thought, shows research carried out in Australian general pracitce

7th February 2020 By Carmel Sparke 🖶 🔎 0 Comment:

Almost nine out of 10 Australian babies have been introduced to peanuts and other food allergens before their first birthdays, a GP-based study shows.

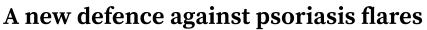
In the research, 86% of 1940 parents replying to the survey (response rate 57%) had adopted updated advice to expose infants early to peanuts and other foods such as dairy and egg.

This was "much higher" than a previous estimate, showing just 30% of infants had eaten peanuts in a survey done in 2011, the authors wrote in the *Medical Journal of Australia*.



Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) guidelines were updated in 2019 to recommend the introduction of common food allergens <u>in the</u> <u>first year of life</u> regardless of their allergy risk factors.

PROMOTED



"(The increase) follows major efforts to promote the revised ASCIA guidelines in both the medical and general media," the WA-based researchers wrote.

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Their study is based on data from a nationwide GP project, trialling <u>a text message</u> <u>reporting system called SmartStart Allergy</u>, developed by Perth GP Dr Alan Leeb.

Dr Leeb was responsible for founding a similar SmartVax vaccine safety program.

Using the allergy app and online questionnaire, researchers obtained the data from parents of 12-month-old infants, attending 69 general practices between September 2018 and May 2019.

They found the following:

- By 12 months, 86% of infants had eaten peanut-containing foods.
- Children with a first-degree relative reported to have a food allergy were less likely to have been introduced to peanuts (81%) than those without a family history.
- Ninety-three per cent of children who did not have a close relative with a food allergy were introduced to peanuts before their first birthday.
- Questionnaire responses showed 13% of parents reported food-related reactions in their children.
- Dairy was the food most frequently reported as causing a reaction (8.6% of exposed infants) followed by peanut-related reactions (2.6%).
- Ninety-seven of 250 parent-reported reactions to food (39%) did not include symptoms that suggested an IgE-mediated allergic reaction.

More information: <u>*MJA* 2020</u>

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